

"The Promise of Tomorrow"
Mayor Walter Maddox
2009 Inaugural Address

November 2, 2009

To our Council President Harrison Taylor, Council Members, Mayor DuPont, all elected officials, Department Heads and most certainly, the people of Tuscaloosa, I am honored and humbled to stand before you as Mayor.

It was with great pleasure that I learned of the Council's decision to re-nominate Councilman Harrison Taylor for President Pro-Tem.

I believe this is a wise decision.

Council President Taylor is a dear friend and he has provided me such honest counsel.

Better yet for Tuscaloosa, he has provided strong leadership.

Council President Taylor forcefully leads with a smile and a knack for interjecting quick witted statements which are commonly referred to as "Taylorisms" by the City Council and Department Heads.

I would like Mr. Taylor to stand and let us commend and congratulate him for being re-elected Council President.

To Council President Taylor, and the entire City Council, I am looking forward to continuing our partnership.

In the moments following my oath of office in 2005, I pledged that our administration would lead with "boldness, creativity and courage."

Guided by our core beliefs, and resolved to make a positive difference, we now see before us the promise of this great City being realized and the pages of our history being written by those who dared to dream.

Our journey to build a bridge to the future has been validated by our citizens, who have returned us to City Hall in order that we may continue to serve them.

This historic achievement of re-electing the entire City Council is just that – History.

This sacred and time honored ceremony is not intended to celebrate the past or boast of our achievements.

To the contrary, we gather here in anticipation that our government and its leaders stand ready to seize this moment of opportunity amidst the recessionary storm clouds dominating the landscape.

We know that in the weeks, months and years ahead our opportunities will be fewer, our challenges will be greater and our decisions will become harder.

I firmly believe at this crossroad, we must rise to this occasion, and as Lincoln stated in his second inaugural to “think and act anew.”

The boldness, creativity and courage of the past four years must remain a constant heartbeat of our second term and nowhere is it more important than our economy.

Tuscaloosa, like so many cities across this nation, feels the tightening grip of this recession.

However, we do not sit still awaiting the deliverance of a stimulus package or the healing grace of time.

In the near future, the City Council will have an opportunity to consider several proposals which will strengthen our commercial, industrial and tourism sectors.

If we are to transform Tuscaloosa, the status quo in economic development will not be acceptable in the years ahead.

We must never forget that we serve people and not bureaucracies because behind every statistic is a father, mother, friend or fellow citizen who is striving for a better quality of life.

To those who have lost their jobs, to those who had to close the doors of their business and to those who have made untold sacrifices to pay their mortgages, buy groceries and save for their children's future, I pledge to you that your City is more determined than ever to diversify and strengthen Tuscaloosa's economy so we can truly be that "shining City on a hill."

Four years ago, I spoke of the winds of change sweeping across Tuscaloosa and as I speak, every corner of our City is seeing investment and progress.

Our work will not be finished until our Core Beliefs are achieved.

In West Tuscaloosa, we will continue our unprecedented level of support which is reversing generations of neglect and providing hope and optimism that hasn't been felt in decades.

At City Hall, we have opened our doors and we will continue our commitment to customer service and transparent government through enhancing 311, eliminating red-tape and implementing even more e-government services.

In planning, we will now take our updated Comprehensive Plan and make it a living, breathing document which will guide growth in a responsible and environmentally friendly manner.

In public safety, we will continue our outreach to the faith-based community as we seek to drastically reduce crime, poverty and blight through our Hope Initiative.

In education, we continue to march forward with the Tuscaloosa Pre-K Initiative which is providing hundreds of academically at-risk children a true head start to a high-school diploma.

Indeed, the winds of change are stronger today than they were when we last gathered because beyond the amphitheater, downtown revitalization, new infrastructure projects, initiatives, and special events, the people of Tuscaloosa again believe we can truly go from good to great.

As I stand before you today, I approach tomorrow with an abiding faith in the future and the understanding that it is not government that inspires.

Rather, it is the resilient, determined and optimistic spirit of Tuscaloosa that is taking us to unforeseen heights and is blazing a new frontier for our children and grandchildren.

The moment of truth has arrived – Our time is now.

With the winds of change at our backs, and the promise of tomorrow on the horizon, together, as one community, let us continue to move forward with boldness, creativity and courage as we build Tuscaloosa's bridge to a brighter future.

May God Bless You and May God Bless the City of Tuscaloosa.